

T I M E

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SHANA ALEXANDER

Just good magazines, period.

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The Feminine Eye

No preliminary soundings, no roundabout hints; the telephone just rang one day early this year in Shana Alexander's Santa Monica, Calif. home. It was Edward Fitzgerald of *McCall's* calling, the resonant male voice said. "How would you like to be editor of *McCall's*?" The petite, blonde divorcee said she'd think it over. Although *McCall's* is the nation's largest women's magazine, with a circulation of 8,500,000, it has not had a female editor in 48 years, and Shana, 43, had not had any experience as an editor.

As a writer, though, Shana is a surpassing pro. After graduating from Vassar, she worked on the Sunday magazine of the old *PM*, later freelanced and wrote radio scripts (among them: *Mr. District Attorney*). Then, in 1951, she took a job as a *LIFE* reporter and in 1964 began "The Feminine Eye" column. Sometimes gentle, sometimes sharp, and always quick, Shana draws meaning—for men as well as women—out of seemingly ordinary personal feelings. She rebelled against presidential polls, for instance, because "I fiercely resent being told what I am going to do. It makes me suspect I may be being programmed. 'There is only one of Me,' I want to shout out."

Shana is not quite sure what *McCall's* needs. After a succession of male editors and a dip in advertising pages, *McCall's* management was apparently in agreement when she told them: "I thought the trouble with women's magazines is that they have been underestimating women all these years, and I wasn't even sure that I believed in the idea of a women's magazine. I said I thought there should just be good magazines, period. Maybe I'm kind of a latter-day feminist, but I think that women can take much more grown-up material."